



---

## **CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE**

Chair Pete Woll called the April 26, 2021, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Board members present:** Pete Woll, Chair; Donna Pridmore, Supervisor; Scott Rumsey, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; being a quorum of the Board.

**Board members absent:** John Ellis; Vice Chair; Lech Naumovich, Secretary/Treasurer. Absences are excused.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Kauffman, Flathead Conservation District (FCD) Staff; Fiona Handler, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member; Kody Coxen, Associate Supervisor; Emily Harkness, Associate Supervisor; Leo Rosenthal, FWP; Sean Johnson, NRCS; Sandy Heil; Kathy & Paul Kusler; Joe Kashi and Terese Lipinski Kashi; Ruthanne Coffey.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Consent Agenda Item 1: Signature Authority**

- Authorization for Hailey Graf to sign on behalf of Supervisors attending the meeting virtually.

### **Consent Agenda Item 2: Phone Poll**

- 4/15/2021 For the purchase of additional fencing materials for the Montana Outdoors Legacy Foundation MOLF replanting project in the amount of approximately \$600.  
Approved by: Pete Woll, John Ellis, Lech Naumovich, Verdell Jackson, Donna Pridmore

### **Consent Agenda Item 3: Minutes**

- Flathead CD April 12, 2021, 310-Meeting Minutes

### **Consent Agenda Item 4: Financial**

Check Detail, April 13 – 21, 2021

1. FFE \$10,000.00
2. Flathead Beacon \$528.00
3. Mountain Trader \$80.00
4. Greater Than Image \$1,500.00
5. CenturyLink \$325.86

Scott Rumsey motioned “to approve the consent agenda.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one was present to comment on items not listed on the agenda.

### **310's**

**Heil**, FL-2020-042C, Blaine Creek, complaint: Pete Woll motioned "to remove the complaint from tabling as the application has been received." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Heil**, FL-2021-032, Blaine Creek, culverts: An onsite inspection will be scheduled at the May 10, 310-Meeting.

**Kummerfeldt**, FL-2021-033E, Whale Creek, emergency: An onsite inspection will be scheduled at the May 10, 310-Meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Supervisor Resignation:** Dean Sirucek submitted his resignation as an Associate Supervisor on March 23, 2021.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to accept Dean Sirucek's resignation." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Supervisor 310 Areas:** Hailey Graf explained that with the addition of new Supervisors, lines for Supervisor areas will be re-drawn and brought to the Board on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**End of Month Budget Report (February 2021):** Copies of the February 2021 End of Month Budget Report were provided to Supervisors in the Board Packets.

Verdell Jackson motioned "to approve the February 2021 End of Month Budget Report." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Adopt a Storm Drain Program:** Hailey Graf explained that as part of the Flathead Rain Garden Initiative, the next step would be to create an Adopt a Storm Drain Program. The City of Kalispell is taking the lead to provide education and outreach materials and create a community involvement program that will help to keep trash out of the streams. The goal is to design a program, specific to Flathead County, that will sustain itself and get the community involved in citizen science. An inventory of storm drains within the City of Kalispell has already been done and would expand to the county. As a partner, FCD would be investing minimal time and financing. The Board agreed that it would be a good opportunity.

Pete Woll motioned "to have staff look into the program." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Dyer's Woad Partnership:** Hailey Graf explained that small populations of the noxious weed, Dyer's Woad, have been identified in Flathead County, and that FCD has worked on this program with the Beaverhead Weed District for the past 2 years. Beaverhead administers a grant for a seasonal employee to identify and eradicate the weed. FCD hires the employee as a short-term employee, and Beaverhead reimburses FCD through the grant. As a partner, a Memorandum of Agreement with Beaver Head County Weed District, and a short-term (5/4/2021 – 5/3/2022) employment letter to the employee would need to be approved and signed.

Scott Rumsey motioned “to continue the program on the Dyers Woad partnership.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**FCD Apparel:** Hailey Graf explained, with new supervisors and staff doing more outreach and education programs, that she would like to discuss options for purchasing apparel displaying the district logo. Supervisors provided suggestions; Hailey will compile a range of costs for items discussed and bring to the May business meeting.

**Legislative Thank-You’s:** Hailey Graf explained that the end of the legislative session is approaching, and that this year conservation districts across the state were fully funded. Hailey suggested sending handwritten thank-you cards to local legislators, and the Board agreed.

Additionally, Hailey proposed sending out invitations to a grand opening of the Demonstration Garden and celebration of FCD’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Event ideas were discussed, and the Board asked that Hailey bring a proposal to the board next month.

**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Funding for wastewater projects:** Hailey Graf stated that ARPA funding may create partnering opportunities for water and wastewater infrastructure, and that the final bill is being discussed. Hailey proposed reaching out to the cities, to ask if they have shovel-ready projects and let them know that the district may be able to help with putting together projects, education, and outreach. Hailey will continue to research this and provide updates to the Board.

**Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Dues:** Ginger Kauffman explained that the MACD dues invoice for FY 2020/2021 was received and that the Board had budgeted for the expense.

Verdell Jackson motioned “to pay MACD dues for FY 2020/2021 in the amount of \$17,000. 00.” Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Furniture & Equipment Disposal Request:** Ginger Kauffman explained that the old shredder is no longer working and needs to be removed from the Furniture & Equipment list.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve disposal of the old shredder.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Watershed Support Program Application:** Samantha Tappenbeck explained that Terese Lipinski-Kashi modified and re-submitted the application for review. The project is to seal a cracked irrigation pipeline and install a livestock fence to protect the riparian area along Ashley Creek. She noted that FCD has secured grant funding for a portion of the livestock fence, and Lipinski is asking for funding to complete the cost of fencing. Samantha stated that funding is available until June 30<sup>th</sup> and added if the Board approves the application, she would like to reserve that funding beyond June 30<sup>th</sup> so fencing could be completed this fall.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the application as submitted.” Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried with one no.

## **REPORTS**

**Flathead CD Staff:** Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Kauffman, and Fiona Handler reported:

### *Office and Administration*

310 – Since April 1, Ginger has processed eight new 310-Permit Applications. She also processed minutes and is working on 310-permits and letters from the April 12<sup>th</sup> 310-meeting. Hailey attended onsite inspections and coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information.

Ginger and Hailey also conducted 310 law outreach and education. They responded to landowner inquiries about 310 permits, provided information to contractors and consultants for the application process, and reviewed the 310 emergency procedure process with landowners. Hailey drafted a 310 educational letter regarding a potential violation on Haskill Creek for the board's review. At the board's request, Hailey also contacted the County Attorney for legal advice on several permits. Ginger delivered 310-documents to the County Attorney's office for review.

Bookkeeping – Lech Naumovich & Ginger Kauffman reconciled the February banks statements on 3/23/2021, and Ginger compiled the February Financial documents. Ginger processed payroll on April 13<sup>th</sup>; the next payroll is April 28<sup>th</sup>. Federal & state tax reports and payments for April will be processed with the April 28<sup>th</sup> payroll. Ginger is working to complete the Montana State Fund Payroll Report covering dates 4/1/2020 – 4/1/2021. Ginger has begun the draft 2020/2021 budget sheets for the district and is waiting to receive the GIS Audit from County Finance which will inform the County preliminary budget sheets.

District Office – Weekly staff meetings were held via Zoom, generally each Monday at 2 PM.

Per the board's request, Hailey contacted CenturyLink to request a reduced rate and increased internet speeds. Because CenturyLink turned down the request, Hailey will move forward with switching phone and internet service to Spectrum. Installation of a new Spectrum modem and router are scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Following direction from the board, Hailey compiled Supervisor Handbooks for each new Supervisor. The Handbooks include information on board governance, the 310 Law, resources and partners, the FCD Personnel Policy, and updated contact information for all Supervisors and Staff.

Hailey researched soil characteristics and reviewed perennial stream proximity for the Griffin subdivision and provided comments to Flathead County Planning & Zoning in response to their request for comment.

Hailey contacted Lincoln Conservation District about replacing the Conservation District boundary signs along the highway. Lincoln CD is interested in applying for an HB223 grant to cover their costs and may ask for support from FCD in that effort.

A special meeting was held on April 8th to discuss budgeting and planning. In preparation for this meeting, Staff calculated the average hours spent towards each of the four goals in the workplan.

Hailey used this information and the past five years of budget to prepare a budget report for the board to review during the meeting.

## **Legislative**

### SJ 29:

Hailey and Jason Mohr completed bill drafting for the Resolution on the Study of Erosion on Flathead River. On April 6, the draft was sent to Sen. Mark Blasdel for review then sent to legal for review on April 9. Per legal department's recommendation, a few final edits were made on April 12. On April 15, the bill was formally introduced as SJ 28 and referred to committee for its first reading. It was assigned to the Senate Natural Resources Committee for a hearing on April 16, at 3 PM.

To prep for the SJ 28, Hailey met virtually with Rebecca Boslough, Jeff Tiberi, and the Legislative Ad Hoc Committee (LAHC) on April 15 and 16. Following advice from the LAHC, Hailey contacted all the interested landowners and coordinated submittal of written testimony. She also met with or contacted all the resource partners, including Flathead Basin Commission, Flathead River Commission, Flathead Lake Biological Station, Fish Wildlife and Parks, Flathead Lakers, and DEQ, and arranged for either written testimony or in-person testimony. Following a last-minute closure of the session floor due to a COVID outbreak at the capitol, Hailey coordinated with all parties to provide testimony through Zoom. Hailey provided written testimony and zoom testimony on behalf of FCD and answered questions to the committee. SJ 28 passed committee at 7-5 votes on April 16.

To prep for the hearing in the House, Hailey met with Sen. Mark Blasdel, Rebecca Boslough, and Jeff Tiberi on April 19. Hailey reviewed the past studies conducted on Flathead River erosion and provided information to Sen. Blasdel for review.

SJ 8 - This resolution on the floodplain permit process (which we provided written testimony in support of), passed 92-8.

Hailey attended the Legislative Ad Hoc Committee meetings on March 30, April 13, and April 20<sup>th</sup>. Hailey provided updates to the committee regarding the Flathead River erosion resolution as needed and the meeting minutes from each meeting were sent to the board for review.

### Outreach:

Hailey worked with the Shipping Depot to package and mail outreach materials to all 25 of our local legislators. Hailey also worked with the LAHC to compile a list of legislators for thank you cards and purchased the supplies.

Trainings – Fiona began the Tech Skills training hosted by BSWC. This training includes two virtual sessions that cover Project WET curriculum, and she will be going to Bozeman the last week of April to finish the rest of the trainings with the other BSWC members. Hailey attended a DNRC training on conservation district board meetings and public meeting law.

### ***On-the-Ground Projects***

Cow Creek Restoration Project – Working with NRCS and DEQ, Hailey began the process for calculating the estimated load reduction to Cow Creek from the restoration project. This will be included with the final report, due in June. Hailey also compiled a draft landowner agreement for

the additional project area and sent it to DEQ for review. A project workday will be scheduled for some time in late May to conduct annual maintenance on the plantings and fence enclosures.

Trumbull Creek – Ginger and Hailey updated the match tracker and vendor invoice for submittal to DNRC. Hailey completed a quarterly status report and submitted it on April 15. Hailey also arranged a meeting between River Design Group and the Flathead County Roads and Bridges department to address additional design work needed to fix the Birch Grove Road Culvert.

Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation Revegetation Project – Fiona and Hailey met Restoration Ecologist, Franz Ingelfinger, onsite to make final plans for planting and purchased fencing materials for protecting the plants from deer. Hailey and Fiona also coordinated with volunteers and landowners for the planting day. Site preparations and a volunteer planting day are scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

Demonstration Garden – Hailey contacted the Flathead County Weed Department and several herbicide applicator contractors for a bid on weed spraying in the demonstration garden. Hailey also contacted several landscaping companies for quotes on installing a new path for the lawn alternatives demonstration area.

Hailey worked with CHS to determine a cover crop seed mix for spring planting. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Hailey seeded annual rye grass in the cover crop demonstration area and seeded native grasses around the windbreak and trees. Fiona and Samantha helped to organize a volunteer planting day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Five volunteers helped to plant 24 lilac bushes in the windbreak area, pull weeds, prune back the pollinator garden area, and pick up trash.

### *Programs*

Conservation Grant Program – The application period for FY21/22 funding requests closes on April 30<sup>th</sup>. We have received five applications so far. Samantha provided consultation to several landowners in response to inquiries.

Seedlings Program – Eleven orders were placed through FCD for spring 2021 delivery. Samantha coordinated with the Nursery on delivery and distributed postcards with order pick-up information to FCD customers. Seedlings were delivered on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and staff assisted with order sorting and pick-up.

Education Grant Program – This program has a rolling deadline but closes during the month of June to close out the fiscal year.

College Scholarship Program – Seven scholarships were awarded in 2021. Samantha prepared award packets and coordinated with high school guidance counselors on notification and plans for graduation ceremonies at each school.

Watershed Support Program – Samantha provided assistance to landowners on Ashley Creek that are interested in the program. An application was presented to the board at the April 12<sup>th</sup> 310 Meeting and that application was rejected. The applicant modified the application and resubmitted it for consideration at the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Fiona's application to the Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Fund for match funding to cover the cost of riparian livestock fencing for this project was approved; she will oversee administration of this grant.

Pollinator Initiative – 56 people have indicated interest in participating in this program. Samantha and Fiona conducted site visits with participants. Fiona created seed packets and distributed them to participants for spring seeding. Samantha appeared on the KGEZ Good Morning Show to promote the program.

Rain Garden Initiative – Fiona, Samantha, and Hailey met with City of Kalispell partners Casey Lewis and Emilie Henry for a planning meeting on April 13<sup>th</sup>. Fiona and Emilie are planning on creating door hangers to hang in target areas within the city limits of Kalispell to encourage homeowners to build a rain garden in their yards.

Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program – This program is administered and managed by a BSWC Member with MACD but advertised at the local level through Flathead CD and Lake County CD. Samantha added program information to the FCD website.

*Education and Outreach*

Workshops and Events

- **Land Stewardship Series:** The series finished and was viewed live by a total of 534 people, with an average of 76 live views per webinar. Surveys were collected following each webinar, in which a vast majority of attendees reported learning new information that they planned on implementing on their properties. Summary information for each webinar below:

<b>Webinar Topic</b>	<b># of Viewers</b>	<b># of Surveys Rec'd</b>	<b># of Recording Views</b>
Soil Health & Composting	101	46	31
Wildlife Conflict Mitigation	65	29	35
Pasture Management	58	26	27
Forest Pests & Disease	96	29	21
Wildfire Preparedness	66	17	10
Septic System Management	74	29	17
Noxious Weed ID & Control	74	27	7

- **Family Forestry Expo:** Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona attended a walkthrough of the site to finalize details for preparation of the event. Samantha and Fiona filmed a short video about the importance of maintaining healthy riparian areas that will be available for all the 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the Flathead Valley. Samantha worked with the Flathead Beacon to design a print advertisement for the event.
- **Flathead Watershed through the Seasons Teacher Training:** Samantha and Hailey presented the Enviroscape model and the Rolling Rivers Trailer to a group of 12 teachers at Lone Pine State Park on April 17<sup>th</sup>. The presentation focused on resources for teachers and how to incorporate stormwater information into curricula.
- **Week of the Young Child:** Fiona attended this event on April 17<sup>th</sup> where she taught elementary aged students about the importance of pollinators.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements about the Conservation Grant Program in the Flathead Beacon (Apr 7, Apr 21).

Website – Over the past 30 days, the website was viewed 2,611 times, with 87.5% new (vs. returning) visitors. Viewers of the website were most frequently referred from Facebook, Kalispell.com, and the Center for Native Plants. The most viewed beyond the FCD homepage were blog posts about the life history of larch trees and heeling in bareroot plants, and pages about nonpoint source pollution and webinar recordings.

Social Media – Over the past 30 days, the FCD Facebook page gained 6 new followers, posts reached 10,298 people, and there were 353 post engagements. The most engaging posts were about the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program, skunk cabbage, and The Local Dirt eNewsletter. The FCD Instagram page gained 17 new followers over the past 30 days.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 4/5/2021 and included information about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities, available programs, a blog post, and 310 permit information. It was opened 341 times by 187 people and clicked 62 times. The most-clicked links were to the volunteer sign-up form, a guest blog post about noxious weed seeds in packets available at local stores, and the FCD Calendar. The current mailing list includes 327 people.

### *Partnerships*

- Hailey attended the public scoping meeting for the W Reserve Drive project on April 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Hailey attended the MACD Leadership meetings and the weekly MACD Legislative Ad Hoc Committee meetings each Tuesday. Hailey attended the MACD Leadership meetings on April 16<sup>th</sup>, the Flathead Basin Commission quarterly meeting on March 31<sup>st</sup>, and the BSWC site supervisor conference call on April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Hailey attended the BSWC site supervisor conference call on April 12. This conference call covered partner updates, program requirements, paperwork deadlines, and member engagement strategies.
- Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona attended three Forestry Expo planning meetings and worked with committee members on specific tasks for hosting a modified event in 2021.
- Samantha and Fiona met with the Flathead Basin Wastewater Partnership on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and provided outreach assistance for the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program.
- Hailey met with the Columbia Falls floodplain administrator to review information on 310 permits

**Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS):** Sean Johnson reported:

➤ **Programs**

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
  - We were able to fund all of our Ashley Lake applications for FY21
  - Only have a couple of high tunnels we were not able to fund but Mindy is actively trying to pull in more money to fund those as well
  - Gave a short presentation to our State Leadership Team on all three of our FY22 TIPs last week for funding considerations
    - Hoping to find out which TIPs will be funded for FY22 by the end of April or early May
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - Continuing to work on our CSP applications for 2021

➤ **Review Items**

- Joint Chief's meeting – 4/9 and 4/22
  - Submittal for regional review by May 21<sup>st</sup>
- Firesafe Flathead meeting – 4/22
- **Upcoming Items**
  - Firesafe Flathead meeting – 3/25
  - Joint Chief's planning meeting – 5/5
- **Miscellaneous**
  - Kalispell working on hiring a new Soil Conservationist
    - Start date would probably be mid-summer
  - Pathways Intern, Kira Jacobson, starting in Kalispell on 5/23
  - Snow Survey – April Snow Survey Report
    - Flathead basin down to 90% of normal, down from 94% from last month
    - Sub Basins range from 68% (Little Bitterroot) up to 96% (Middle Fork Flathead)
    - March saw only 56% of normal precipitation for the month so when the April report comes out, I anticipate the percentages to be dropping noticeably

**Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD):** Pete Woll reported MACD is working on legislation and the consolidation of MACD and Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM); Area meetings are scheduled, and the fall convention is being planned.

**Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB):** Verdell Jackson reported that a proposed RV Park on Flathead River will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB):** No report.

**Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC):** The next meeting is scheduled for May 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

**Flathead Basin Commission (FBC):** No report.

#### **MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF**

**Service to the FCD Vehicle:** Pete Woll reported that he has received several responses regarding the internal leak on the vehicle. No action taken.

**File Migration to the SharePoint:** Hailey Graf reported that the file migration has not yet happened as we are waiting on installation of a modem and router from Spectrum.

**Highway Signs:** Hailey Graf explained that John Ellis had asked her to research installation of new signs on district boundaries. She stated that signs are shared with other districts, however, after talking with neighboring districts, found that they do not have funding and would have to apply for grants. She asked if the Board would support the idea of FCD providing a portion of match. The Board agreed and asked Hailey to find out what a sign would cost if the other districts could not secure grants.

**Rolling Rivers sublease to Lake County CD:** Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the Rolling Rivers trailer is owned by MACD and leased by FCD. A sub-lease must be signed when another district wants to borrow the trailer. Lake CD was going to use the trailer for an upcoming event however their request was cancelled this morning.

**Scholarship Ceremony Schedule:** Samantha Tappenbeck explained that FCD has awarded 7 college scholarships and, typically, a representative from FCD attends the award ceremonies to present to the students. Samantha will email the sign-up sheet to Supervisors for this year's ceremonies.

**Conservation Grant Program ranking criteria:** Conservation Grant Program Ranking Criteria was provided to Supervisors in the Board Packets. Samantha Tappenbeck stated that submittal of applications closes this week. The Board provided ideas for modifying the ranking criteria, and Samantha suggested criteria could be added that the applicant has demonstrated commitment to the project via pursuit of personal research of the project, landowner education opportunities, partnerships, or in-kind services. Samantha will work on the criteria and review new applications with the Board.

**Personnel:** Pete Woll closed the meeting at 9:20 P.M. and staff was excused. Pete Woll re-opened the meeting at 9:25 P.M. and staff returned.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to award a bonus of \$500 to Samantha Tappenbeck for work done above and beyond on the Landowner Series Workshops." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Legacy Mountain Holdings Complaints:** Verdell Jackson will contact Mikel Siemens to schedule an onsite inspection for the technical review.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 10, 2021, 7:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned "to adjourn." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman  
Administrator

Hailey Graf  
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>5/10/2021</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)